

VZCZCXRO2232

PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR

DE RUEHPG #0634 1520740

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 010740Z JUN 07

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9151

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0008

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 000634

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/30/2017

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SUBJECT: CZECHS SUPPORT U.S. SANCTIONS ON SUDAN; MIGHT SUPPORT SIMILAR EU OR BILATERAL SANCTIONS

REF: STATE 73693

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Mike Dodman  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

**¶1.** (C) Poloff met with Czech MFA Deputy Director of Middle East and Africa Department Josef Koutsky on May 31 to discuss the U.S. sanctions against the Sudanese government over lack of progress on Darfur. When asked whether the Czech Republic would consider imposing bilateral sanctions, Koutsky said the Czech government imposed visa sanctions years ago on certain Sudan government officials (whom he could not name), but this did not include Sudan's State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs Ahmed Harun, Chief of Military Intelligence and Security Awad Ibn Auf, or rebel leader Khalil Ibrahim. He said the Czech government may be open to imposing visa sanctions on these officials.

**¶2.** (C/NF) On the prospect of EU sanctions, Koutsky said EU member states are currently debating the issue of Sudan in advance of the June GAERC meeting. He said France and the UK have recently proposed positions on Sudan; the UK proposal includes sanctions similar to those imposed by the United States. Koutsky said the Czech Republic would likely support the EU consensus position on Darfur, including sanctions.

**¶3.** (C) When asked whether the Czech Republic would consider assuming more of a leadership role within the EU on Darfur-related issues, Koutsky reiterated that the Czech Republic has other priorities. (Note: Czech officials have explained on many occasions that the Czech government has limited expertise on African affairs, and therefore focuses its efforts on countries it believes can benefit from the Czech experience gained transitioning from an Soviet-style authoritarian regime to a thriving democracy (e.g., Cuba, Belarus, the Balkans, and Iraq). The Czech government therefore defers to the EU on foreign policy and military issues concerning Sudan. As an EU member state, however, the Czechs strongly support EU assistance to the African Union Mission and support international pressure to force the Sudanese government to cooperate with the United Nations. End note). Nevertheless, Koutsky thought the Czech government could do more in the political sense. One potential area for engagement: the brother of the Sudanese foreign minister, who is currently the head of EU affairs at the Sudanese MFA, was educated in Prague in the 70s.

GRABER